(c) whether it is also a fact that roads in various States particularly in NCT of Delhi are in a poor condition and road accidents due to poor roads are increasing every year; and

(d) if so, the steps Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA): (a) to (b) There is no report of the Planning Commission stating that Government is losing Rs. 10,,000 crore annually due to India's rough roads. However, an Expert Group set up in 1996 made some estimates in this regard.

(c) and (d) The Government of India is responsible for development and maintenance of National Highways. The National Highways are kept in traffic worthy condition within the available resources. Several measures/ programmes like National Highways Development Projects (NHDP), Improvement of Riding Quality Programme (IRQP) and other developmental activities have been taken up for enhancement of the capacity and quality of the National Highways including the National Highways in NCT Delhi.

Widening of National Highways

†2340. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD.

Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have taken a decision of converting present four-lane National Highways of the country into eight lane highways;

(b) if so, percentage of six-lane, eight-lane and four-lane Highways out of the total National Highways so far; and

(c) the names of States in the country where the work of expanding National Highways is yet to start?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA): (a) to (c) The Widening of National Highways in the country including widening of four-lane to eight-lane is a continuous process and are taken up according to the traffic needs, *inter-se* priority and availability of funds. At present the

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

aggregate percentage of four-lanes, six-lanes and eight-lanes National Highways to the total length of National Highways are about 9 per cent, and 0.07 per cent respectively.

New policy for ports

2341. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering the new policy for major ports;

(b) whether the new port policy strives to promote both inter-port and intra-port competition to provide users with a choice not only between different major ports but also between different operators in the same port;

(c) if so, by what time the new policy is likely to be announced; and

(d) to what extent this policy would be beneficial?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) A comprehensive policy for the Maritime Sector which includes Ports, Merchant Shipping and Inland Water Transport is under finalization.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) No specific time-frame has been laid down for announcement of the policy.

(d) For the first time, a comprehensive policy for the maritime sector is being formulated. The policy seeks to combine vision and strategy for the sector through harmonious and coordinated development of our maritime assets like ports, shipping, inland water transport systems and ship building and ship repair industries. The policy will facilitate holistic development of the maritime sector.